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JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

Evaluation of the regional project RLA/79/031: Programme on joint studies on Latin American economic integration

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly and of the Economic and Social Council the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Evaluation of the regional project RLA/79/031: Programme on joint studies on Latin American economic integration (ECIEL)" (JIU/REP/89/4).

JIU/REP/89/4

Geneva, March 1989

Evaluation of the Regional Project RLA/79/031 PROGRAMME ON JOINT STUDIES ON LATIN AMERICAN ECONOMIC INTEGRATION (ECIEL)

Prepared by

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Joint Inspection Unit

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) of the United Nations and the specialized agencies included in its work programme for 1988 a report on regional project RLA/79/031, entitled Programme of Joint Studies on Latin American Economic Integration (ECIEL).

2. This report contains an evaluation of the type requested from JIU by the General Assembly in resolution 42/218, paragraph 4. In 1988, the Unit made an ongoing evaluation of regional project RLA/002/1988. The evaluation of this regional project is a post-project evaluation, undertaken after the project has been completed.

II. PROJECT DOCUMENT - DURATION

3. The first phase of the ECIEL project was covered in the Governments' project RLA/73/027. The document was submitted in February 1974 and the starting date was 1 July 1975. UNDP's initial contribution amounted to $US 694,400 and the counterpart contribution to 4,822,000 cruzeiros (Brazilian Government). The executing agency was UNDP and the co-operating agency ECIEL. The second phase was begun in January 1978 (RLA/77/013) and the third in July 1979 (RLA/79/031). The executing agency was still UNDP and the government implementing agency ECIEL together with its member institutions. Project RLA/79/031 was scheduled to end in June 1984, but was extended to the end of the year. In January 1987, the General Co-ordinator of ECIEL sent the Office for Projects Execution a technical report on the final studies carried out under the project. In the UNDP document "Programme and project management system enquiry facility (enquiring function 10)" (26 August 1987), it was announced that the project would end as far as UNDP was concerned in 1987.

Objectives

4. The project objectives as stated in the original project document were both long-term and short-term. Among the long-term objectives was the institutional one of creating in Latin America a community of research workers in the applied social sciences who could continually provide the empirical and conceptual inputs necessary for rational decision-making at the regional and subregional levels. Among the project's short-term objectives were, in addition to the completion of three main research programmes, to publicize the research results and their policy implications for decision-making and to train economists and social scientists in applied socio-economic research concerned mainly with social and economic integration and development; the project was in addition to collaborate on a series of socio-economic studies aimed at promoting Latin American integration. These studies were to be undertaken "jointly" by the institutions of the participating countries.

5. The latest project document (RLA/79/031) added another immediate objective, the training of economists and social scientists by means of studies, seminars, workshops, exchanges of research workers, etc.

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Financing of the project - UNDP input

6. In a note dated 3 February 1984 from the Regional Director for Latin America to the General Co-ordinator of ECIEL, it was stated that UNDP's collaboration with ECIEL since 1974 amounted to $2.2 million, which represented a considerable financial effort by the Regional Programme over the previous 10 years. It was estimated that contributions to ECIEL's operations from other sources (Brazilian Government, Inter-American Development Bank, World Bank, Ford and Rockefeller Foundations, etc.) covered approximately $5 million. It should be mentioned that in that note the Regional Director duly went on to express the hope that Brazil, the host country, and the other countries concerned would try to determine their collaboration with ECIEL in relation to their priorities.

7. In none of the project documents was there any analysis of its chances of sustainability, that question being left to the countries concerned. At present ECIEL's only source of finance is the Brazilian Government.

8. In addition to the institutions mentioned, the following have contributed to ECIEL: the Agency for International Development (AID), the Organization of American States (OAS), the European Economic Community (EEC) and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC).

Headquarters

9. ECIEL had its origins in a meeting held in Brazil in 1963 by representatives of academic institutions in that country, Argentina and Chile. It was decided that to start with it would operate in Washington D.C., where the Brookings Institution would be responsible for its co-ordination.

10. In 1973, the institutions belonging to ECIEL decided to transfer its headquarters from Washington D.C. to Latin America, accepting an invitation from the Brazilian Government for the Co-ordination Centre to be established in Rio de Janeiro. In July 1974, ECIEL began to operate in Rio de Janeiro, where it still has its headquarters.

Organization

11. According to the first project document (RLA/73/027, p. 13) the project was to be organized as follows:

(a) Within the context of the procedures established for regional projects executed directly by UNDP, the Resident Representative in Brazil, under the guidance of the Office for Projects Execution (OPE) and the Regional Bureau for Latin America was to be responsible for the general management and supervision of the project. The Senior Technical Co-ordinator and the other international experts were to report to the Resident Representative through the ECIEL General Co-ordinator. In addition, there were to be ad hoc consultations between UNDP and ECIEL on particular aspects of the implementation of the project and/or related matters.

(b) Financial and administrative reporting was to be governed by OPE's procedures and timetables. Substantive reports were to be made twice a year.

Structure of ECIEL

12. Under its statutes, the Programme of Joint Studies on Latin American Economic Integration (ECIEL) is an independent, non-profit making, apolitical scientific research body whose central objective is to programme and develop studies of interest for the economic development and integration of Latin America.

13. The structure of the Programme is as follows:

Member institutions;
Assembly of Representatives of the member institutions;
Governing Council;
Co-ordinating Centre;
Co-ordinating Committee.

14. The member institutions are divided into: full members, which are those that take part in academic research and in the governing bodies; participating members, which only take part in academic research; and associate members, which are those that are not involved in research or in the governing bodies but co-operate with ECIEL to help it achieve its aims and objectives. The great majority of full members are government bodies, such as universities, academies, planning centres, etc.

15. The responsibility for running the Programme rests with the General Co-ordinator. This executive official is appointed by the Council, an appointment that has to be ratified by the Assembly of Representatives. He joins with the technical co-ordinators, invited research workers and the financial and administrative manager to form the Co-ordinating Centre.

16. Project document RLA/77/013, in describing the UNDP inputs, says that the General Co-ordinator is a UNDP official subject to the same regulations as any other. Subsequently the General Co-ordinator was appointed in accordance with the statutes.

III. ONGOING EVALUATIONS

17. The project was the subject of two ongoing evaluations, one in 1976 and the other in 1983.

18. The ECIEL project document (RLA/79/031, , phaseIII) had the following to say in paragraph 6:

"6. In July 1976, a UNDP-ECIEL mission made an evaluation of the project, which was being supported by UNDP, and reached the following conclusions:

(i) ECIEL had been successful in setting up a network of economic and social research institutions and in co-ordination, promoting and facilitating technical exchanges as a means of transmitting knowledge. That had enabled comparative studies to be made of processes and conditions in different countries of the region;

(ii) The research had been of a high technical level, as could be seen from the seminars and the report of the joint mission;

(iii) ECIEL had established quite an efficient way of working, which had enabled institutions at a less advanced technical level to benefit from ECIEL's services and from contacts with more advanced institutions. That pattern of operation should be strengthened in the future."

19. The second ongoing evaluation was carried out by an evaluluation mission sent by UNDP, which submitted its report on 21December1983. The evaluation mission's terms of reference were as follows:

(i) To evaluate the project's activities and outputs and its validity and relevance in relation to the economic and development issues facing Latin American countries;

(ii) To evaluate the training and information activities undertaken by the project;

(iii) To analyse the use of UNDP resources in the various project activities;

(iv) To find out what future activities were planned by ECIEL and, on the basis of paragraphs (i) and (ii), to examine the alternatives and possible modes of co-operation for UNDP in the regional programme within the context of projects being undertaken in the region in related areas.

20. In this evaluation, special emphasis was placed on the financial aspects of the project. At that time, funds were being provided from four sources: the Brazilian Government, UNDP, IDB and (indirect) contributions by institutions taking part in the studies. The General Co-ordinator of ECIEL was advised to follow a very tight policy in the matter of expenditure.

21. It is very interesting, in this Inspector's opinion, to consider the position of the Brazilian Government as the headquarters country and main source of funds for the project at present, which was described as follows in the evaluation:

(a) The Brazilian Government continues to regard the ECIEL programme as important and useful for the countries of Latin America and accordingly wishes to keep it in operation and is ready to go on supporting it;

(b) The present period of financial stringency and difficulties makes a general cut in expenditure necessary, and hence a reduction in budgetary contributions to ECIEL;

(c) It considers that through efficient administration of more limited resources and efforts by ECIEL to keep expenditure to a minimum, it will be possible for the project to go on undertaking activities to achieve its aims;

(d) It considers that the studies should be more pragmatic, so as to be more closely related to Latin America's present needs and problems;

(e) It also considers that without sacrificing academic quality studies could be carried out over shorter periods and given due publicity so as to produce more immediate effect;

(f) In order to strengthen ECIEL's regional character, it considers that other Latin American countries ought to provide contributions and support for the programme's future operations and that there should also be continuing support from IDB and UNDP.

IV. PROJECT OUTPUTS

22. Among ECIEL's long-term objectives was the establishment of a Latin American network of institutions for the study of the social and economic sciences. When the first phase of the project began, ECIEL had only three members. By August 1978, it had 45: 14 were full members from 7 Latin American countries, 7 were participating members from 6 countries and 23 were associate members.

23. In 1988 ECIEL has 72 members: 35 full members from 12 countries of the region (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela); 28 participating members from 12 countries of the region (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Panama, Peru, Trinidad, Uruguay and Venezuela); and 9 associate members (see annex I).

24. As regards the publications put out by ECIEL, it can be said that they are quantitatively and qualitatively of great importance. They can be classed under nine main headings: prices and purchasing power parities project; employment project; consumption and income distribution project; education and development project; industrialization and integration project; project on wage structures in manufacturing industry; reports and documents prepared by Felipe Herrera (the first General Co-ordinator); Ensayos ECIEL and seminar summaries (see annex II).

25. This Inspector, however, wishes to point out that only one of the study projects relates to Latin American integration.

26. ECIEL's work on the training of human resources has also been of importance. This can easily be confirmed by a glance at the reports on the many seminars and workshops held.

V. EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

Methodology

27. Evaluation of the project presented the Inspector with the usual difficulties encountered in evaluating regional projects. The "field" of th evaluation covers a wide territory, namely, the whole of Latin America. The beneficiaries of the project are, in particular, Governments and/or their institutions engaged in socio-economic studies connected with Latin American integration. This led the Inspector to consult Governments, in the first place, through the institutions represented in ECIEL, and, secondly, the academies or private study and research centres making up the institutional network.

Indicators

28. For this purpose the Inspector wrote to these institutions (getting answers from roughly half of them) and to others that did not belong to ECIE asking for their opinions on the following indicators:

(a) Do you think that ECIEL and the network of institutions it represents constitute an appreciable cultural contribution to Latin America and that it should continue to be supported?

(b) Do you think that ECIEL should modernize its structure, making it more flexible and suited to today's means of communication?

(c) Do you think that in its work programme ECIEL should emphasize socio-economic questions relating directly to the process of Latin American integration?

(d) Do you think that, given that a large part of the members of ECIE are institutions involved in social studies, priority should be given to studying integration in the region?

Results of the survey

29. (a) Approximately 93 per cent of the replies stated that ECIEL constituted an appreciable cultural contribution to Latin America and should continue to be supported;

(b) Some 95 per cent of institutions considered that ECIEL ought to modernize its structure;

(c) Some 80 per cent said that ECIEL's work programme should be related to the process of Latin American integration; and

(d) Some 60 per cent were in favour of giving priority to studies on social integration.

30. All the replies have special value and significance for this Inspector. He himself welcomes the answers to the fourth question. The process of regional integration is advancing so slowly - and in some parts stagnating - because due regard has not been paid to the fact that integration has a strong social component. It is peoples that have to integrate and not chambers of commerce. The work done by the European Economic Community on social integration provides a particularly important point of reference. Various specialized agencies of the United Nations might be willing to collaborate on this matter. Years ago (1971), UNESCO had the following to say on integration: "Such an extraordinary venture goes beyond the limits of a merely economic scheme. To approach integration purely and simply from that standpoint and to make its final aim the establishment of a Latin American common market is to take a very one-sided view of it. The process of integration covers all aspects of the daily lives of the Latin American peoples, forming a comprehensive process in which economic integration is to be seen alongside the other forms of integration - cultural, educational, scientific, social, political."

31. Ten years earlier, the Secretary-General of the United Nations wrote as follows in his foreword to The United Nations Development Decade (1962):

"We are learning that development concerns not only man's material needs, but also the improvement of the social conditions of his life and his broad human aspirations. Development is not just economic growth, it is growth plus change."

32. In his report on the work of the Organization (1972), the Secretary-General said that "Our perception of the problems of the developing countries must change. The distinction between economic and social progress may even have become an impediment to effective action ... It is no longer possible to rely on the assumption that an expanding modern sector will eventually absorb the mass of people and provide them with decent living standards."

33. These appeals for economic growth to be accompanied by social growth, by an improvement in the quality of life, have passed more or less unheeded, not just by the United Nations itself but by the rest of the system as well.

34. It should be noted that in United Nations terminology the expression "social development" covers the state of the population, social welfare, health, food and nutrition, housing, planning and construction, education, employment, prices, wages and salaries, social security, social defence, community development and regional development.

35. The Inspector recognizes that ECIEL has given certain importance to the social aspet of development. To this effect, it has realized studies on education, nutrition, health and housing. However, he believes that had those accomplishments taken an integration orientation they could have been more useful for the governments.

V. CONCLUSIONS

36. With regard to the first indicator, the Inspector endorses the results of the ongoing evaluations, which were later confirmed by the Governments. ECIEL is setting up a network of government and private institutions of great importance for socio-economic studies in the region.

37. There is no doubt that - as also stated in the 1983 evaluation - the academic sector cannot remain detached from the critical situation at present facing Latin America, the effects of which will continue for some time.

38. Briefly, while the importance of ECIEL is recognized, there remains the problem of its "sustainability", or chances of getting finance. Institutions of this type can either finance themselves or exist on outside support, as ECIEL has done until now. The Inspector doubts whether UNDP or some other international organization can again become a source of finance. He also thinks it unfair that the Brazilian Government should represent the sole source of funds. The obligation to provide resources is shared by the various Governments with institutions represented in ECIEL.

39. Faced with this kind of problem, the Joint Inspection Unit earlier recommended that the institution should be linked to a leading public body in the academic field, whether a university or some other State institution. Such a link need not be for an unlimited period, but could be for a fixed number of years. The activities of the Co-ordinating Centre would be undertaken by that university or institution. The possibility of transferring ECIEL to a private body could also be envisaged. The idea of self-reliance is very much to the point here. All this requires a decision by the Assembly of Representatives.

40. The next question relates to the second indicator, concerning the need to modernize and simplify ECIEL's institutional structure. Ninety-five per cent of the organizations answering the questionnaire said they were in favour of such modernization. It should lead to an appreciable reduction in operating costs. The idea of modernization should also, in this Inspector's view, extend to the way its documents are prepared and published. The concept of

the "book" should give way to the concept of the "working document". The integration of Latin America, as a socio-economic phenomenon, is more in the nature of a working hypothesis than a set of orthodox ideas. This is also a matter to be settled by Governments.

41. It has already been said that ECIEL's publications are of great quantitative and qualitative value. However, this Inspector considers that ECIEL's future work programme should place the emphasis almost exclusively on matters directly related to Latin American integration. In this area, for various reasons, ECIEL's activities have been very limited. Hitherto, the tendency has been to take a markedly "economic" approach, which is only indirectly related to integration. It is possible that ECIEL could find appreciable support among specialized agencies in the system for "joint studies" on social integration, especially UNESCO, ILO, WHO and FAO. The background or working documents prepared by specialists in those agencies - who are familiar with Latin America's possibilities and needs - can be studied and commented upon by members of ECIEL with a view to seeking common ground as a point of departure in the long and difficult task of regional integration. There would also be the question of developing a suitable methodology for the "joint study" of such problems. This methodology, also applicable to documents produced by members, would give Governments opportunities for joint action as well. The documents prepared in Brussels by the European Economic Community also have considerable methodological value.

42. With reference to the methodology followed by ECIEL in the selection and co-ordination of studies, the Inspector believes that it has a great value. That methodology should be followed in forthcoming studies.

43. To sum up, this Inspector recommends that UNDP should finance an Assembly of Representatives of the member institutions to consider: (a) the continued existence of ECIEL, whether linked or not to a government body; (b) the simplification and modernization of its structure; (c) reorientation of its work programmes and changes in its types of publications.

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ANEXO I. INSTITUTOS MIEMBROS DEL PROGRAMA ECIEL (1988)

ARGENTINA	Centro de Estudios de Estado y Sociedad (CEDES)
	Centro de Estudios Macroeconómicos de Argentina (CEMA)
	Centro de Investigaciones Económicas, Instituto Torcuato Di Tella
	Centro de Investigaciones Sociales sobre el Estado y la Administración (CISEA)
	Fundación Bariloche
	Fundación de Investigaciones Económicas Latinoamericanas (FIEL)
	Fundación Mediterránea
	Fundación de Investigaciones para el Desarrollo (FIDE)
BOLIVIA	Departamento de Investigaciones Económicas, Universidad Mayor de San Andrés
	Instituto Boliviano de Estudios Económicos (IBEE)
	Instituto de Estudios Sociales y Económicos (IESE)
	Instituto de Investigaciones Socioeconómicas, Universidad Católica Boliviana (IISEC)
BRASIL	Centro Brasileiro de Análise e Planejamento (CEBRAP)
	Centro de Desenvolvimento e Planejamento Regional da Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (CEDEPLAR)
	Departamento de Economia, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro (PUC)
	Departamento de Economia, Universidade de Brasília
	Fundacao Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE)
	Fundacao Instituto de Pesquisas Económicas, Universidade de Sao Paulo (FIPE)
	Fundacao Joao Pinheiro
	Instituto Brasileiro de Economia, Fundacao Getúlio Vargas (IBRE)

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	Instituto de Estudos Avancados em Educacao, Fundacao Getúlio Vargas (IESAE)
	Instituto de Desenvolvimiento Económico y Gerencial (IDEG)
	Instituto de Planejamento Económico e Social (IPEA)
	Instituto Universitário de Pesquisas do Rio de Janeiro (IUPERJ)
COLOMBIA	Centro de Estudios sobre Desarrollo Económico, Universidad de Los Andes (CEDE)
	Corporación Centro Regional de Población (CCRP)
	Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística (DANE)
	Fundación para la Educación Superior y el Desarrollo (FEDESARROLLO)
COSTA RICA	Centro para la Promoción de la Ciencia y el Desarrollo Socioeconómico (PRODESARROLLO)
	Instituto de Investigaciones en Ciencias Económicas, Universidad de Costa Rica (IICE)
CHILE	Corporación de Investigaciones Económicas para América Latina (CIEPLAN)
	Departamento de Economía, Universidad de Chile
	Grupo de Investigaciones Agrarias (GIA) de la Academia de Humanismo Cristiano
	Instituto de Economía, Universidad Católica de Chile
	Instituto Latinoamericano de Doctrina y Estudios Sociales (ILADES)
	Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas de Chile (INE)
ECUADOR	Consejo Nacional de Desarrollo (CONADE)
	Instituto de Investigaciones Económicas, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Ecuador
	Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos (INEC)
JAMAICA	Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of the West Indies (ISER)

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MEXICO	Centro de Estudios Educativos, A. C. (CEE)
	Dirección General de Estadística, Coordinación General del Sistema Nacional de Información
	El Colegio de México
PANAMA	Ministerio de Planificación y Política Económica
PARAGUAY	Centro Paraguayo de Estudios de Desarrollo Económico y Social (CEPADES)
	Centro Paraguayo de Estudios Sociológicos (CPES)
PERU	Centro de Investigación, Universidad del Pacífico
	Departamento de Economía, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú (CISEPA)
	Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE)
REPUBLICA DOMINICANA	Banco Central de la República Dominicana
	Fondo para el Avance de las Ciencias Sociales
	Instituto Tecnológico de Santo Domingo (INTEC)
TRINIDAD Y TOBAGO	Institute of International Relations (IIR) University of the West Indies
URUGUAY	Banco Central del Uruguay
	Centro de Informaciones y Estudios del Uruguay (CIESU)
	Centro de Investigaciones Económicas del Uruguay (CINVE)
	Centro Latinoamericano de Economía Humana (CLAEH)
VENEZUELA	Banco Central de Venezuela
	Centro de Estudios del Desarrollo (CENDES)
	Centro de Estudios del Futuro de Venezuela
	Centro de Planificación y Desarrollo Económico, Universidad de Carabobo
	Instituto de Estudios Superiores de Administración (IESA)
	Oficina Central de Estadística e Informática (OCEI)

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ORGANISMOS REGIONALES	Comisión Económica para América Latina, Santiago (CEPAL)
	Instituto Latinoamericano de Desenvolvimento Economico e Social, Rio de Janeiro (ILDES)
	Junta del Acuerdo de Cartagena, Pacto Andino, Lima
	Organization de Estados Americanos (OEA) Washington, D. C.
	Programa Regional del Empleo para América Latina y el Caribe, Santiago (PREALC)
	Secretaría Permanente del Tratado General de Integración Económica Centroamericana, Guatemala (SIECA)
MIEMBROS ASOCIADOS	The Brookings Institution, Washington D. C.
	Centre d'Etudes, Prospectives et d'Informations Internationales, Paris (CEPII)
	Center for Latin American Development Studies (CLADS) Boston University
	Institut für Iberoamerika-Kunde, Hamburg
	Instituto de Cooperación Intercontinental, Madrid (ICI)

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